

Getting Help for Alcohol or Drug Abuse

Alcohol or Drug Abuse

Abusing alcohol or drugs can cause serious medical and personal problems. Alcohol and drug abuse can lead to accidents, depression, and problems with friends, family, and work.

Do You Have a Drinking Problem?

Ask yourself the questions below. A "yes" answer to any of them may be a sign that you have a drinking problem. Alcohol abuse and alcoholism are treatable with counseling, medicines, or both. Talk to your doctor or nurse.

- Have you ever felt that you should cut down on your drinking?
- Have people annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
- Have you ever felt bad or guilty about drinking?
- Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or to get rid of a hangover?

Drug use can cause heart and breathing problems. Alcohol abuse can cause liver disease, heart problems, and several kinds of cancer.

Here are some suggestions about drugs and alcohol:

- Don't use illegal (street) drugs of any kind, ever.
- If you drink alcohol, limit the amount—no more than one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men. One drink equals a 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler, a 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits, such as gin, whiskey, or rum.
- Do not drink alcohol before driving or operating heavy machinery.

Reference Source: "The Pocket Guide to Good Health for Adults." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality: May 2003.

